

Teeing it up with Tom Lehman for Weekend Jetaway Culinary Casino Classic

Written by Karah Van Kammen

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By Alison Bailin Batz



On Friday, October 23, Airpark resident and PGA golfer Tom Lehman will partner with fellow Airpark business AXA Advisors Southwest as well as Talavera and Proof at the Four Seasons Scottsdale Resort Troon North, Paul Martin's American Grill, Sprinkles Cupcakes, The Melting Pot, The Capital Grill Scottsdale, Jalapeno Inferno, Rhythm & Wine, Sol Cocina, Tom's Thumb, Alliance Beverage and many more for the 4th Annual Weekend Jetaway Culinary Casino Classic. Though he and the team are busily coordinating the unique "taste" event, Lehman recently sat down with us to talk life, the links and – of course – the big event.

How old were you when you first started playing golf, and when did you go pro?

Lehman: I first tried it around 3rd grade, but didn't really get into it regularly until I was around 12, so more the 6th grade. A little over a decade later, by age 23, I went pro.

What is your favorite memory as a pro?

Lehman: In 1999, I was a member of the American Ryder Cup team. This annual competition between American and European golfers is among one of the biggest events of the golf year. The Europeans were leading 10–6 heading into the final round, but we rallied on Sunday. My teammates included the late, great Payne Stewart, Phil Mickelson, David Duval, Tiger Woods, Jim Furyk and others.

Least favorite?

Lehman: I missed a two-foot putt on the 18th green of the Phoenix Open one year that caused me to miss the cut, and that is about as mad as I ever got on the course.

Who is your favorite golfer?

Lehman: As a kid, I admired Arnold Palmer because of his style and aggressive nature. As an adult a fellow professional, I would say the late Byron Nelson because – in addition to being an amazing player – he lived his life off the course as meaningfully as he did on it.

Any superstitions while playing?

Lehman: I usually mark my ball with a dime and typically use a white tee. But I am definitely not one of those players who refuses to change his dirty socks for weeks if I am on a streak. PU!

What are some of your favorite courses in the Valley?

Lehman: DC Ranch for sure. I also love the TPC Scottsdale, Encanterra, Verrado and the Phoenix Country Club.

For most people, golf is a hobby. Since it is your job (and passion), what are some hobbies?

Lehman: I love fly fishing, specifically in mountain streams for trout, and playing any games with my kids. I also have a passion for volunteering.

How did you get involved in Weekend Jetaway in the first place?

I serve as a founding board member of Elevate Phoenix. Our mission is to strengthen character, empower knowledge and elevate relationships among youth in Arizona's most urban communities. Currently, we have a 98% graduation rate and 90% post-secondary rate among participating youth. In 2014, we connected with AXA to officially make Weekend Jetaway our annual fundraiser.

How is Weekend Jetaway different from other galas and fundraising events?

First, the location: we host the "taste" even of sort – thanks to AeroJet – in a luxe private jet hangar right in the Airpark. Second, the vibe: we've done away with the sit-down dinner and instead offer guests the opportunity to sample some of the best chefs in Arizona's menus at their pace. Third, and this is the big one: rather than a band or dancing, we indulge our guests in a dice-style casino game during the event, with the night's ultimate champion taking home an all-inclusive private jet vacation for four! Oh, the auction is pretty spectacular too!

How can the Airpark community get involved?

In addition to purchasing tickets to the event, which are available for \$125 at www.weekendjetaway.org, we are really hoping that our Airpark

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friends will consider donations to our silent and live auction or even a sponsorship to be our full partner on this undertaking. The majority of funds from the evening come from our silent and live auctions – so every little bit helps in a BIG WAY toward our goal. Anyone with any questions or ideas for auction items can reach us through the website or directly by contacting abailin@hmapr.com.

